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I. ORIGIN AND PROGRAM

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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Since January 1848, when Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their Communist

Manifesto called upon the workers of the world to unite against their capitalist exploiters and to bring into being the "proletarian world federation of Socialist republics", four international organizations have been formed for the avowed purpose of creating such a federation. The Fourth International, the only one still functioning, is a federation of Trotskyite and affiliated parties throughout the world, which broke away from the Soviet-dominated Third International, the "Comintern."

The rift among Communist leaders, which brought about the establishment of the Fourth International, was based almost entirely on ideological differences. Both Communists and Trotskyites have claimed to be scientific and "true" Marxists; both consider themselves to be faithful disciples of Marxism as expounded by Lenin. For the Communist Parties, however, Stalin's interpretations of Marxist-Leninist theory have become an essential part of the basic doctrine, whereas the Trotskyites completely reject Stalin's views. The key to the struggle between the representatives of these two Marxist groups is the difference between Stalinism and Trotskyism. This conflict is historical, theoretical, tactical and psychological. To a great extent, it is also based on emotional adherence to one of two leaders at war with each other.

Those non-Marxists who interpret history in terms of the clash of individuals trace the split in the Third International to the incompatibility of two leaders of the Russian Revolution. Lenin's strength was founded on his practical, as well as his theoretical, capabilities. Neither Trotsky nor Stalin had both gifts. It was the practical politician, Stalin, who won out in the end over the brilliant theoretician.

Communist historians portray Trotsky as a "dissident" and "wrecker" from his first entry into the revolutionary scene. In 1903 the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party split into two groups: the Mensheviks, a right wing faction, and the Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin. In 1910, Trotsky attended a Social-Democratic congress at Copenhagen, where he defended a position of his own, midway between that of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. In July 1917, however, he joined the former and attained a very high position in the Party. Nevertheless, official Soviet history refers to him as a "Menshevik counter-revolutionary".

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During the period between the establishment of the Soviet State and Lenin's death, Trotsky was often in disagreement with the other Party leaders. As principal representative of his government at the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty negotiations with Germany, he broke up the discussions against Lenin's wishes. Two weeks later, on 23 February 1918, Lenin forced the signing of a treaty.

Hailed by the adherents of the Fourth International as the creator of the Red Army, Trotsky used Czarist officers in the military establishment. The satisfactoriness of the results obtained was later used to justify the employment of "bourgeois" technical experts in Soviet factories. Nevertheless, such tactics, regardless of their necessity at the time, serve the Communists in accusing Trotsky of capitulating to the bourgeoisie.

During the Polish war of 1920, Trotsky opposed the disastrous advance on Warsaw, but was overruled by Lenin. Again, in 1923, he was accused of canvassing for the support of the newcomers to the Party (among which he was numbered) against the "old guard".

Stalin came to power upon Lenin's death in 1924. Trotskyites claim that, on his deathbed, Lenin asked that Trotsky take his place. Communists, of course, refute this claim, pointing to the many instances of disagreement between Trotsky and Lenin.

In the autumn of 1923, during Lenin's illness, Trotsky had issued his opposition platform, Declaration of the Forty-Six Oppositionists, demanding the restoration of factionalism, as opposed to "Democratic Centralism". In a follow-up letter, Trotsky attacked the Party apparatus, declaring that the Party had "degenerated" into a bureaucracy. These two documents formed the basis of a fierce discussion within the Party, and Stalin appears to have triumphed.

Trotsky continued in open opposition. He attacked the government's agricultural policy, insisting on vigorous action against the kulaks. When Stalin adopted Trotsky's recommendations on this point in 1929, Trotsky had already been banished.

In the summer of 1926, the followers of Trotsky and Zinoviev (who had formed the "New Opposition") united to form an anti-Party bloc. The Central Committee warned that this bloc must be dissolved. Instead, its leaders submitted a statement of their views and demanded a discussion of them. In a general discussion which took place in October 1927, the opposition was routed.

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The tempo of the struggle increased, the activities of the opposition were beginning to constitute a danger to the Party, and on 14 November 1927, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Party.

The Trotskyites consider that Stalin fought Trotsky because the latter represented a threat to his own power. Communists, on the other hand, state that Trotsky was expelled as an "opportunist", a "counter-revolutionary" dangerous to the progress of Communism in the USSR.

Whatever may be the motivating factor, a basic distinction in their interpretation of Marxist policy underlay the disputes between Trotsky and Stalin, and led to the split. The disagreement between Stalin's theory of "socialism in one state" and Trotsky's support of the "permanent revolution" still keeps Trotskyites and Communists in conflict.

Although Trotsky expressed his theory at an early stage in his career, its most lucid exposition is found in his The Permanent Revolution, published in 1930. In accord with Lenin's position, he maintained that the establishment of Communist power in Russia must lead to a world-wide proletarian revolution, and that true socialism could not be achieved in Russia alone. Since capitalism would persist in the rest of the world, any policy contrary to that of world revolution would be bound to lead to the degeneration of the proletarian dictatorship established in Russia. Trotsky believed that true Communism began with an international program, gradually building up Communism in each country until a proletarian world federation of socialist republics evolved.

Stalin, taking a practical stand on the evolution of historical processes, held that there was no hope for immediate world revolution. The achievement of socialism in Russia would, therefore, be the most effective and inspirational form of propaganda for the establishment of world Communism. In spite of the encirclement of capitalist states, socialism could be accomplished in one country-- the USSR.

The difference was only one of timing. Trotsky put world revolution first, Stalin put it second. As a matter of fact, Stalin's theory was later modified to include the necessity of encircling the USSR with friendly states.

Even after Trotsky's exile in 1928 to Alma Ata, he continued to exert some influence on international Communist policy. In exile he wrote The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of Fundamentals, an

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analysis of the draft program of Bukharin and Stalin, which he sent to the 6th World Congress of the Comintern in Moscow. Through an accident unfortunate for the Communists, this document was actually translated and brought to the attention of certain delegates, such as James G. CANNON, then representing the CPUSA and now head of the Socialist Workers Party. In 1929, Trotsky was finally banished from the country and found refuge in Turkey. Communists throughout the world heard of the expulsion of the "counter-revolutionaries" in the Soviet Party. Because of rigid Party discipline, most of those who believed Trotsky to be right kept their deviation from the Party line secret. Trotskyites, however, began to establish clandestine contact with each other as early as in 1927. From the time of Trotsky's expulsion, factions began to form within the national Communist Parties and the Comintern. Even after they were expelled from their Parties, these Trotskyite groups continued to consider themselves as members of "left opposition groups" of the Communist Parties. The Americans, for example, called themselves "The Communist League of America, Left Opposition of the Communist Party".

This factional status of the Trotskyites continued until the early 1930's, when a series of events led to the formation of independent Trotskyite parties and an international composed of these parties.

In 1931 Trotsky wrote a pamphlet entitled Germany: the Key to the International Situation, outlining the danger of fascism in Germany. The Nazi seizure of power two years later proved him right. According to the Trotskyites, the Comintern leaders and the German Communists had capitulated without a fight. Trotsky said of the event, "Defeat without battle is the most demoralizing of all defeats." He declared the Comintern bankrupt: "We must have new parties and a new International."

In the USSR, meanwhile, any possibility of reconciliation between Trotsky (as well as other "oppositionists") and the Communists was being vigorously ruled out. In the fall of 1936 and throughout 1937, the Moscow trials were in progress; Trotsky in exile and other opposition officials were accused and convicted of treason, conspiracy, and as foreign agents. The prosecution claimed they had

"set out to destroy the Party and the Soviet state, to undermine the defensive power of the country; to assist foreign military intervention; to prepare the way for the defeat of the Red Army; to bring about the dismemberment of the USSR; to hand over the Soviet Maritime

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Region to the Japanese, Soviet Belorussia to the Poles, and the Soviet Ukraine to the Germans; to destroy the gains of the workers and collective farmers; and to restore capitalist slavery in the USSR."

Trotsky fled to Mexico in January 1937, but kept in constant touch with Parties allied with him throughout the world. In September 1938, the Fourth International was proclaimed at a congress held in Europe. Trotsky himself was not present, but he drafted the document, The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, which became the basis for the new organization's program. Briefly, this program envisioned the ultimate creation of a proletarian world federation of socialist republics. It was to be accomplished by individual nations, which, after their socialization, would form continental federations and finally group themselves into a world federation. The international administrative and functional organization was designed to expedite this end, being divided into national sections combined into continental groups, all of which receive their direction from an international body of officials with headquarters in Europe.

Following the outbreak of World War II, an emergency conference was held in Mexico in 1940, over which Trotsky presided. The war was condemned at this meeting as imperialistic. Three months later Trotsky was assassinated, presumably by agents of the GPU. The Fourth International continued to function, however, even without its leader.

According to the claims of its International Secretariat, the Fourth International is the only world revolutionary party which continues the fight of Marx and Lenin. It stands for "the restoration, the revival of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian Revolution and in the early days of the Communist International."

The Trotskyites stress the theoretical differences between themselves and the Communists, believing as they do in the concept, espoused by Marx and Lenin, of the inseparability of theory and action. According to Lenin, "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." The proper Marxist approach to action is to determine the correct theory and then to allow no deviation. Yet Trotsky, as noted, was the great proponent of "factionalism" in the early days of the USSR. This tradition has been carried over into the Fourth International, so that, as in the revolutionary Bolshevik-Menshevik days, a Trotskyite party often includes a "minority" and a "majority", each representing a slightly different theoretical or tactical approach to national or

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international Trotskyite policy. Factions within Trotskyite parties or total splits in parties are not uncommon. It is found, similarly, in present-day Trotskyite policy, that members of any one Party or the representatives of various parties affiliated with the Fourth International may be in disagreement on major issues.

Since the inception of the Fourth International, the attitude and policy to be adopted towards the Soviet Union have formed a major topic of discussion. Although the Trotskyites do not support the theory of "socialism in one state", the defense of the Soviet Union is a basic point in their platform. At the same time they devote a great deal of time and effort to attacking the present Soviet regime and working, though with little apparent success, for the overthrow of what Trotsky called the "degenerated workers' state".

In 1940, the Fourth International condemned the war. The Stalinists made a similar declaration at that time, but urged the foreign Parties to support and exploit the war effort of the Allies after Russia had been attacked.. The Trotskyites, on the contrary, urged the workers of the world to resist military conscription. They also bitterly condemned the Nazi-Soviet pact as another example of the "counter-revolution" led by Stalin; but after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, the Fourth International, with "factions" dissenting from this position, supported the Soviet war effort, considering the victory of the Allies as the lesser of two evils.

After the war, in the period when the USSR and the capitalist countries were overtly still allies, the Trotskyites began their agitation for world revolution, condemning the Communists for having failed to convert the Allied victory into a victory for world socialism.

When the Trotskyites decided that world capitalism was preparing for an attack on the USSR, the official Fourth International policy reverted again to the defense of the Soviet Union. According to the International Secretariat at the first World Conference held in April 1946, "From the historic point of view the contradiction between world imperialism and the Soviet Republics is infinitely greater than are the antagonisms which exist among individual capitalistic countries themselves....", since the Soviet Republics "constitute an obstacle to imperialistic greediness for world markets."

Further, "The Fourth International makes no secret of announcing that the defense of Soviet Russia is part of its cause. But this defense must now more

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than ever be in favor of only the Russian Revolution and not the Stalinist
counter-revolutionary regime."

This unconditional defense of the USSR is based on the supposition that the capitalist nations will engage in an anti-Soviet war, and that the war will come before the Trotskyites (who claim to have a group within the USSR) are able to overthrow the Stalinist regime. It is based also on the consideration, that, while the Soviet Union is not a dictatorship of the proletariat but a dictatorship over the proletariat, certain industrial and agricultural gains have been achieved under the Stalinist regime and these must not be allowed to be destroyed by the capitalists. They must be saved for the day when the proletariat will actually assume power. Trotskyites, therefore, while constantly reminding the world proletariat that the USSR is not a true Marxist state, continue to fight for its existence. The capitalist nations once defeated, the Trotskyites will force a revolution in the USSR and "the permanent world revolution" and the "proletarian world federation of socialist republics" will become a reality.

Preparatory to the World Congress of the Fourth International which was held in 1948, the Internal Bulletin of the International Secretariat published varying points of view on the theoretical stand to be taken towards the Russian question. These minority opinions in general deplored the "unconditional defense" of the USSR and the definition of that nation as a "degenerated workers' state". According to this point of view, the USSR cannot be so called because it is not even a "workers' state". Consequently, the "dissident Trotskyites" called upon the Fourth International to battle against the Soviet regime as well as against the capitalist powers, and to bring about revolution in all countries.

The immediate program of the Fourth International is reported to include the following points:

- a. Confiscation of war profits.
- b. Nationalization of large industries, mines, public service institutions, etc., without indemnification of shareholders.
- c. Exclusive control by workers of nationalized industries.
- d. Removal of all occupation forces from Europe.
- e. Placing the German worker on the same level as other workers in the world.
- f. Refusal to take part in military service.

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g. Sabotage of war production.

h. Refusal to permit working masses to pay taxes, and the levying of taxes only upon the wealthy class.

Tactically, the Trotskyites have operated mainly through penetration. Their technique is to attempt to split other parties and organizations, principally Socialist and Communist, by entering and operating as fractions within them. It is for this reason that the Communists often decry the Trotskyites as "wreckers". This tactic has a theoretical basis in Trotsky's so-called "French turn" of 1934, in which he directed his followers to join, whenever possible, those reformist Socialist organizations which might be open to them, in order to establish contact with the "developing left-wing" and thereby lay the groundwork for new Trotskyite parties. In spite of this penetration policy, one principle of Trotskyism is the unconditional independence of its parties at all times and under all circumstances.

Even where Trotskyite parties have every opportunity to work as legal parties, they employ clandestine methods and often operate wholly underground. World Congresses are held secretly; all precautions being taken to establish cover for the meetings. The most common form of communications between the International Secretariat and Continental Committees is by air mail, although tourists have often been known to act as couriers. All vital communications are sent by courier. Air mail letters between officers of the various national groups are never addressed to the officers but to insignificant members.

The funds of the Fourth International appear to be adequate despite its small membership. It has been speculated to what extent Trotskyite groups have been financially and morally supported by the Right as a "bulwark" against Communism. It has been reported, for example, that the Parti Communiste Internationale (French section of the Fourth International) may receive funds from right-wing groups. A recent report concerning the proposed organization of a Trotskyite Party in Denmark states that the government does not look unfavorably on its formation because of its role in "embarrassing" the Communists.

It is clear that Trotskyite parties represent also standard penetration targets for Communist Parties and the Soviet intelligence services, and it may be assumed that Trotskyite parties are generally penetrated by secret members of the Communist Party, and wherever they are sufficiently important, by agents of the MI.

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The exact number of adherents to the Fourth International is not known.

It is probable that its members and sympathizers total less than 100,000. Its members do, however, include some capable Marxist theorists, and the prolific output of its propaganda organs, its agitation among working populations and colonial peoples, and its revolutionary program make it worthy of attention.

The remainder of this paper will analyze the structure of the Fourth International and summarize the known facts concerning Trotskyite parties throughout the world.

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